



STATE OF WASHINGTON

VETERANS AFFAIRS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PO BOX 41150 • Olympia, Washington 98504-1150 • (360) 753-5586

**Meeting Minutes
May 18, 2006**

PRESENT:

Bill Schrier, American Legion
Dick Whipple, VFW
Chuck Karczewski, PAV
David Riggs, Washington Veterans Home
Dennis Primoli, At Large
Deryl McCarty, MOAA
George Edmundson, VVA
Lloyd Burroughs, NABVETS
Mary Jo Cahill, American Red Cross
Michele Colpaert, DAV
Philip Ruhmshottel, Marine Corps League
Roy Compton, American Ex-POWs
Rupert Markham, Washington Soldiers Home
Dan Gogerty, Veterans Legislative Coalition
Dr. Les Burger, Patriots Pride of Washington
John Lee, WDVA
April Harris, WDVA/VAAC Support

EXCUSED:

Richard Marin, At Large
Robert Harcum, MOPH
Barry Pfundt, AMVETS
Oria Berndt, At Large

ABSENT:

Bob Westphal, American Legion
Frank Cordero, Native American Veterans
Julie Mock, Gulf War Resource Center
Dick Kirk, At Large

Call To Order
Invocation
Pledge of Allegiance
Welcome by Chairman, Bill Schrier

Resignation of Washington Veterans Home representative David Riggs

Chairman Schrier, thanked Dave for his service on the committee and presented him with a framed certificate of appreciation

Approval of minutes from March 2006 meeting

Motion made by Chuck Karczewski

Second by Lloyd Burroughs

Passes unanimously

HOMELESS VETERANS:

Sheila Sebron & Edward Hill

Presentation about Homeless services they are coordinating with veterans service groups and other entities to provide training and connection to resources such as housing to help homeless veterans in the state.

They are currently working with Pierce and King Counties and are targeting youth to get involved with returning veterans as well as enlisting the help of those they serve to build capacity and support. They are getting contracts with community based organizations and veteran organizations. Part of the proceeds for training goes to the organization that co-sponsors the training.

Q & A:

Are you partnering with anyone else to get this started? Working with several groups and DoD now. Talked to King County. As we walk someone through we partner and then collect data. As a veteran is helped they become part of the system.

Funding? Classes are \$25 a piece. Donated space, etc. About \$10 per person returned to the sponsors.

What about the term 'incompetent' vets? Not the same as 'homeless'. Can be homeless and not incompetent. They don't know the answers of how many are out there. Trying to get that data. Continue working with individual veterans groups.

Alfie Alvarado offered an explanation of what is considered 'incompetent' by the VA. Incapable of managing their financial affairs. VA has a fiduciary program to adjudicate a veteran to be incompetent and assign a fiduciary to take care of their bills so they can pay their bills and maintain some independence by having their rent paid. Made by the VA based on a physician's statement. Support network can bypass this and a friend or family member can assist the veteran in making good decisions financially.

Clinical psychologist on staff? Work with VA network. Setting up a peer counseling program which should be operational this summer. AAPTSD has a men's group and a women's group will be set up.

They are not a 501c3 and the VAAC recommended they apply since they are collecting fees.

Who is the body who coined the term 'incompetent' and what would it get to change to 'incapable'? Alfie said WDVA will look into that. It is a Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) issue.

CLOVER PARK TECHNICAL COLLEGE – NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT – Sharon Barber

Sharon Barber provided a handout and information about the new center for business development, opening July 1st at Clover Park Technical College. Eight state and non-profit providers are housed in one building to provide all consulting services needed for individuals who wish to start their own business, including tax information, attorneys and bankers, all free of charge.

Community Capital Development (division of SBA) will look at loans below \$35K or for people whose credit isn't the best and other loan companies won't serve.

Training programs will be offered in two training offices at \$35-\$45 per training. The actual price is not firm yet. There is a proposal to waive fees for active duty or veterans.

They don't ask for a business plan but a cash flow sheet for one year to see what it will cost. Then they are assisted in developing their business plan, but must take the initiative and do the work themselves.

Q & A:

Are they in the Memorandum of Understanding for returnees? This new program will be included in MOU and will work with the Veterans Innovations Program board.

Cost Outlay for veteran? \$50 to get certified if woman or minority., otherwise \$100. You can see these advisors over and over again and you don't have to have an affiliation with the college .

Big Bend Community College in Moses Lake is similar. They have not collaborated with them. Bates also has a similar program and one with Green River but what CPTC is doing is bigger and better by having all parties co-located.

Will this program be expanded? Possibly

Mechanism in place to track people taking advantage of this program and are you passing it on to DVA? No, but would like to.

Would CPTC offer help as far as operational hours and will help them through the planning, but they must show initiative and look at alternatives to support success?

Alfie Alvarado, WDVA Deputy Director, said they are the only program that has approached DVA to specifically help veterans. Work with this one and if others want to get on the bandwagon, that would be great

One group missing? Service to Disabled Owned Business - A bill passed to give veterans exceptional consideration, but with the passage of I-200, women and minorities don't have that anymore.

Sharon: Can add to the group. There is plenty of room in the center.

Open to having disabled vets work with you? Sharon personally pushed that aspect to the college. Supports the military. Vice-president of the college makes the decisions. Poor management and poor capitalization is usually the reason businesses fail.

Small business owner question: Assist with bonding and insurance? No agency in group doing that, but SBA does that and counselors will provide that advice.

VETERANS INNOVATIONS PROGRAM - JOHN LEE (handout)

Reasonable to assume that some of this money could help to establish a business. Thanks to VAAC and Dennis Primoli, in particular, who supported and helped push this bill through the legislative session this year.

\$2M in two components: Emergency funds up to \$500, and education and training and all other services to assist returnees in employment. Seven members of the board including DVA, AWB, Military Dept. CTED, ESD, and Board of Community and Technical Colleges and a community representative, Larry Seaquist.

Make sure the \$2M results in a tangible outcome of assisting veterans get a job. Financial assistance, day care, car fixed, etc. to assist in employment. Two years from now, we have this number of vets employed, finished school, etc. Outcomes.: Have money available to LVERs, DVOPs, network of veterans starting July 1, 2006 Might overlap with Vocational Rehab.

Entire commitment is \$2M. Limiting fund.

Work Opportunity Tax Credit? Link to that? Disabled vets have federal programs, but they are hard to figure out. Veterans Legislative Coalition (VLC) talked about tax credits for employers at their meeting last weekend. One provision doesn't let the credit go to third-party employers. If changed, could result in \$10K. Dennis thinks we can approach Speaker of the House, Frank Chopp, when bill sunsets for supplemental funds.

Need to work with board to see if a client would be eligible for all three support services. Needs to be immediate. Not interested in spending \$400 in staff time to give someone \$500 in help. Doesn't need to be codified. Work with other sources of funding so that we meet the goal of getting the veteran a job.

Unemployment: John Lee will know soon how many are unemployed upon return from deployment. ESD working with WDVA on that. 60% used less than 50% of their unemployment insurance. Of returnees, 12,000 have filed. WDVA doesn't have the number yet of how many used all of their unemployment and are still not employed.

Some are not applying for, or not eligible, for unemployment. Sheila: When you run into someone who needs a job, call WDVA for help. There are businesses who will hire a veteran if they know about them. Apprenticeships are available. Need to find, identify and turn over to the LVERs and DVOPs at Worksource.

Many have not filed for unemployment and ESD is working on outreach. Separation briefing is quick and doesn't either include or is swift in telling them about their benefits.

WDVA STRATEGIC PLANNING WORK SESSION

Attendees were separated into two groups to offer ideas for the following questions:

Outreach: What are creative ways to get the word out to veterans and their families who may be eligible for VA benefits? What role do you see Veterans Service Organizations and Auxiliaries playing?

VSP reps use newsletter
Anyone who served is a vet
VSO outreach
Retailers – signs at certain times of the year
Gun shows, county fairs, parades
DEA
Campaign – Identify audience – vet or family
e-mail
PTA/churches/schools (access youth)
Obituaries/funeral homes
Provider gatherings – training
Propaganda/airdrops
Pointman International

PSAs w/phone numbers of who to call
Brochures
Spokespeople for sporting events
Fraternal Organizations
Focus on people who need services (IRR, NG)
Use benefits books
telemarketing – survey
VSO mass mailing & newsletters
Beef up the govt. letter & customize by zip code
Internet groups/search engines
Printed cards for street handouts
disease management organizations

As Washington's veterans age, what type of services that we are not providing should we consider?

RX & Medications
Washington Specialized Long Term care services
Cemetery at Orting
Expand Spokane home
Adult day care
Transportation availability
Retail industry support directory
Veterans call center
Work with VA on healthcare access issues

Expand outreach in other areas of the State of
Home care services
Severely disabled vet income assistance
In state transportation network
Care provider support and training
Reduced property taxes and financial planning
Medical equipment recycling center
Marketing on social security benefits

Homeless Veterans Services: How can we enlist the support of communities around the Orting and Retsil homes to support WDVA's effort of providing transitional services?

Better define 'homeless veteran'
Learn from federal and local levels
Use land at Orting for housing
Invite more community groups
Work w/businesses as service providers
Focus on solutions
Testimonials from existing successful programs
Partnerships w/existing community network
One on one peer support

Use support of VAAC and VSOs
Community meeting
Job – work programs to benefit community
Use community volunteers to advocate
Elected officials
Speakers group to orient on 'profile' & program
Locate & network w/higher learning
Sons of the American Legion
Start NOW!

Performance: What can WDVA do to improve its services to veterans and their families?

Veterans Information Network
Keep DVA web updated
Do a monthly message
Use VSO seminars
Educate general population
Open DVA service offices in rural areas
Assist with transportation to medical, FADs, etc.
Increase family outreach opportunities
Exit interviews and follow up
More communication on critical programs such as:
 SSI, Medicare D, benefits
Women veteran issues
Predictability

Improve Outreach/VSO contracts
Use plain talk
VSO mailing list
Use veteran programming- PJ Scott
Take services to the community
Open the MOU
King County outreach efforts w/posters & tear-offs
Shorten lead time to family days (FAD)
Build trust in government
VSOs and awareness of exiting veterans for provisional services
Preventative services: family readiness

Key Points:

Building trust in government

Start Now = Get Orting community in on the ground floor of planning.

EMBLEM FUND COMMITTEE – Bill Schrier

The VAAC has appointed Deryl McCarty, Lloyd Burroughs and Dennis Primoli (chair) to do a Request for Proposal for memorial funds to be awarded this year.

This program is supported by the emblems purchased for license plates and the proceeds are distributed via grant to communities who submit proposals to create or maintain veteran memorials throughout the state.

LICENSE PLATES UPDATE – Heidi Audette, DVA

Community event participation is key - Let her know of events in your area
Currently selling -500 per month

Packets with information were provided to VAAC members

3,354 sold since January 3rd

Have now paid back DOL for establishment fees and put \$16K in Veterans Stewardship Account.

Info on \$5 donation cards – initial checks will be presented at VSO meetings and will be scheduled shortly

If we sell 250,000 license plates, it will generate \$6.9M

Get very excited and promote this.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Flag Amendment – Dennis Primoli

June 7th at noon the Citizens Flag Alliance meeting w/Gen. Brady

Flag amendment SJ12

King County Job Fair – Beth Augustine

June 21st Job Fair, service and information – First Mike, John & Alfie will be there. BBQ for vets. Worksource site and King County representatives at the Machinists' Union Hall on W. Marginal Way- go online, print the flyers and distribute – start @ 9 a.m.

Go2worksource.com and click on the veterans icon.

Garden of Remembrance – Skip Dreps

Nineteen names will be placed on the Persian Gulf panel in Seattle on May 29th at the Garden of Remembrance and reception. Invitations were sent and include free parking at Benaroya Hall.

POW/MIA Flag – Mike Montaney

There is a law to fly the POW/MIA flag at all state offices. Has the VAAC provided guidance to people? In eastern Washington they don't know how to do it and various configurations are present such as all three flags on the same staff or in the wrong order. Mr. Montaney asked for a letter from the VAAC to clarify the correct display.